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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Department of Genetics

Mr. R. R. Neild  
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute  
Sveavägen 166  
S - 113 46 Stockholm, Sweden

Dear Mr. Neild,

Thank you for sending me the proofs edition of volume 5 of your CBW studies. I do not have to tell you that these have been an absolutely invaluable contribution to the development and furtherance of national policy in this field. As a microbiologist I am personally and particularly grateful.

The threat to world stability from the potential proliferation of C and BW is so manifest that almost any other comment may seem like quibbling about details. Nor, in the light of the Soviet acquiescence to a prompt negotiation of a separate convention on BW possession need we continue to argue the merits of particular versus comprehensive bans.

I am bound to say, however, that Part 2 of Chapter 3, on the relationship of CW to national security, is obviously biased by a commendable enthusiasm for the most rapid elimination of CW capability. The strategic postulates on which it is founded, which resemble those of "massive retaliation" of an earlier era are being rapidly undermined at the present time and may undergo considerable change in the near future. I believe, therefore, it would be important to enlarge the discussion of this vital segment of the argument to include the hypothesis that nuclear reprisal may become essentially unusable for any purpose whatsoever except to deter an all out nuclear attack on a capable power.

No one will quarrel with the ultimate desirability of effective CW disarmament but there is, nevertheless, a substantial gap between profession and practice and many people will place a far greater weight on the problem of verification to be sure that disarmament has been accomplished than is implicit in your argument. The type of situation which military establishments will foresee as a justification for the use of CW might be illustrated by a scenario in which a country like Israel or even Sweden were to become the focus of a major international embroil. An attacking power could then foresee a great advantage in

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completing a chemical Blitzkrieg before other powers with possibly marginal interests could mobilize an effective response. The aggressor, even if he had nuclear capability, might hesitate to use it for fear of a larger risk that his action would provoke a nuclear retaliation.

You may argue that present chemical weaponry is only marginally useful for such a strategic purpose. But this would merely provoke military establishments to continue, preferably in clandestine fashion, precisely the line of development work that would perfect CW as a strategic weapon.

All things considered an unverified CW ban may still be a small improvement over the present situation which likewise tends to promote technological competition. My main point would be that easy acquiescence in a loose agreement will make it very difficult to accomplish a meaningful one.

The one step that I agree could and should be undertaken without delay in the field of CW (apart from the obvious need to clean up the barriers to US ratification of the Geneva Protocol) is a chemical non-proliferation treaty. If this were promoted as an amendment to the nuclear NPT it would have particular force in deterring the dissemination of CW capability to client states.

The discussion of the "humanity argument" well articulates many excellent arguments. However, I think the last paragraph at the top of page 127 will be so unpersuasive to many readers as to blunt the force of the rest of the discussion.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr  
cc:Dr. C.G. Heden

• mental suffering from  
CW exceeds other  
weapons!